

DD Tips

Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities

Summer 2009

State Council

The most recent State Council meeting was held at the Highlands Golf Club on August 14, 2009. The State Council reviewed and evaluated both Formal and Opportunity Grant applications received. For more information, access our website by visiting <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/ddplanning>

Direct Support Workforce

The United States Senate unanimously approved [Senate Resolution 228](#) designating the week beginning September 14 as "National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week." Sponsored by Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE), the resolution recognizes the invaluable supports Direct Support Professionals provide and the difference this workforce makes in the lives of Americans with disabilities.

Redesigned Website - Disability.gov

U.S. Department of Labor has launched **Disability.gov**, a redesigned federal Web site that connects the more than 50 million Americans with disabilities to thousands of trusted resources on disability-related issues, programs and services. Formerly known as DisabilityInfo.gov, the site has been completely redesigned and updated with new social media tools, such as a blog and a Twitter feed, to encourage feedback and interaction among visitors. Disability.gov is not just for Americans with disabilities, but also for parents of children with disabilities, employers, workforce and human resource professionals, veterans, educators, caregivers and many others. Disability.gov features comprehensive information from 22 federal agencies, as well as educational institutions, non-profit organizations and state and local governments. Topics covered on the site include: benefits; civil rights; community life; education; emergency preparedness; employment; health; housing; technology; and transportation.

Visit www.Disability.gov

Innovative Thinkers, Innovative Solutions

The following article is from “Business Sense” June 2009 - “Many of today's hottest technologies were first developed for people with disabilities, for example, text messaging, which has long been used by the deaf community. It is an increasingly popular communication tool for everyone. Similarly, the technology used to improve wheelchairs now powers people on Segways® up and down city streets.

Innovative thinking drives business success. To effectively compete, businesses of all sizes need employees who can think outside of the proverbial box, especially in today's difficult economic environment. And more and more employers are discovering a ready source for such talent—people with disabilities. On a daily basis, people with disabilities must think divergently about how to tackle challenges and get things done. At work, this translates into innovation. A few years ago, when Walgreens adjusted the technology used in one of its distribution centers to make it easier to use for employees with disabilities, the company quickly found that replacing keyboards with touch screens worked better for everyone and made all of them more productive.

For this reason, innovation is one of the key themes highlighted in the [Business Case for Hiring People with Disabilities](#), an online, multi-media resource that illustrates how people with disabilities add value to America's businesses across six key concerns common to all employers, regardless of size or industry. In addition to innovation, the Business Case addresses return on investment, human capital, marketing, diversity and social responsibility.

The Business Case for Hiring People with Disabilities, which includes [Frequently Asked Questions on disability employment](#), is one of many resources available from the U.S. Department of Labor's [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) (ODEP) to help America's businesses implement policies and programs that foster more inclusive workplaces.” Visit www.dol.gov/odep

Record Number of People with Disabilities Voted in 2008 Election

New numbers released show Americans with disabilities voted in record numbers in the 2008 presidential election, according to the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), the country's largest cross-disability membership organization. The Help America Vote Act mandates voting be accessible and AAPD has been leading nonpartisan voter registration and education drives amongst the nation's 56 million people with disabilities since 2001.

According to a study by Lisa Schur and Douglas Kruse, professors at the School of Management and Labor Relations, Rutgers University, who have conducted numerous studies on voting and people with disabilities, 3.8 million more people with disabilities

voted in the 2008 presidential election than the 2000 presidential election. According to the study, 14.7 million Americans with disabilities voted in the 2008 presidential election compared to about 10.9 million Americans with disabilities who voted in the 2000 presidential election.

According to Kruse and Schur, the turnout of people with disabilities was only 7 percentage points lower than that of people without disabilities in the November 2008 election. Among the voting eligible population (citizens age 18 or older), 57.3 percent of people with disabilities voted, compared to 64.5 percent of people without disabilities. The numbers of voters with disabilities in 2008 shows voters with disabilities are just as large of a voting bloc as other minorities as compared to 15.9 million African-Americans and 9.7 million Hispanic voters in the 2008 election.

Of importance to Nebraska, the study showed a turnout rate of 62.1% of those voters with disabilities and a 68.0% turnout rate for those without disabilities showing only a 5.9% gap between voters with disabilities and those voters without disabilities. When compared to the national average of voters with disabilities, Nebraska voters with disabilities was 4.8% higher. Nebraska voters without disabilities were 3.5% higher than the national average of voters without disabilities. Visit <http://www.aapd.com/Communications/2009RecordNumbers.html>

Department of Justice Releases New Guide on Accessible Meetings

The Department of Justice (DOJ) recently published new ADA guidance on conducting accessible and inclusive meetings. The 28-page guide “Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field,” covers access to meeting sites as well as presentations, printed materials and other forms of communication. Information is provided on how to evaluate the accessibility of meeting rooms, parking, routes and entrances, and restrooms. The guidance also covers layout of meeting spaces, accessible circulation and seating. Provisions of printed materials in accessible formats, and making audible communication accessible through assistive listening systems, realtime captioning, and sign language interpretation. The guide is available on DOJ’s website at www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm

Inclusion and Inclusive Practices

Our thanks to staff with the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council for sharing this media piece produced by Kids Included Together (KIT) about inclusion and inclusive practices. Visit <http://www.kitonline.org/ntci/training/slideshow/flv7player.html> to view the video.



STATE RESOURCES

Regional DD Council Contacts

- ♦ Region I: [Carolyn Foged](#) - 308-635-7901
- ♦ Region II: [Pam Mann](#) - 308-535-8079
- ♦ Region III: [Rita Skiles](#) - 308-995-6585
- ♦ Region IV: [Cheri Matthews](#) - 402-287-2061
- ♦ Region V: [Carla Lasley](#) - 402-435-2899
[Mary O'Hare](#) - 402-475-8022
- ♦ Region VI: [Kay Gordon](#) - 402-333-7806

Nebraska Contacts

Visit <http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/StateSpecificInfo.aspx?State=NE> for a comprehensive list of Nebraska State agencies related to disabilities. This Web site is a publication of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities.

- ♦ Nebraska Health & Human Services System Advocate: 800-254-4202
- ♦ Hotline for Disability Services: 800-742-7594
- ♦ Nebraska Advocacy Services: 800-422-6691
- ♦ Munroe-Meyer Institute: 800-656-3937
- ♦ The Arc of Nebraska: 402-475-4407
- ♦ Statewide Independent Living Council: 402-438-7979
- ♦ People First of Nebraska: 308-872-6490
- ♦ PTI Nebraska (Parent Training Information): 800-284-8520
- ♦ ATP (Assistive Technology Partnership): 888-806-6287
- ♦  Housing Resource Specialist: 888-806-6287 or 402-471-0734
- ♦  Funding Coordinator : 888-806-6287 or 402-471-0734

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